



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
LANSING

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## Ballot Production Standards

### I. Paper and Ink Specifications

All paper and ink specifications provided by the voting equipment manufacturers must be closely observed.

Vendors who produce ballots for use with the Optech optical scan voting system should exercise special care to ensure that the ballots are fully compatible with the AutoMARK voting assist terminals. As certain ballot production methods can result in the “pooling” of ink on the ballots when marked with the AutoMARK system, the conduct of appropriate testing procedures to avoid such problems are important. If left unchecked, the ink pooling problem can lead to tabulator failures.

### II. Ballot Instructional Language

- The ballot instructional language provided through the Michigan Department of State’s Bureau of Elections must be used. In instances where the ballot does not contain a partisan section, a nonpartisan section and/or a proposal section, the instructions must be modified as appropriate. The voting instructions may be printed on the detachable ballot stub to gain space if needed for ballot layout purposes.
- If the ballot will be produced with the ballot stub at the bottom, the words “REFER TO VOTING INSTRUCTIONS BELOW” must be printed across the top of the ballot.
- The ballot instructions must provide clear direction on the type of marking implements which can and cannot be used when voting the ballot. After consulting with the voting equipment vendors, the following ballot marking instruction is recommended:

**IMPORTANT:** To mark your ballot, use only a black or blue ink pen or other marking tool, if provided. **DO NOT USE ANY OTHER INK COLOR!**

### **III. Judicial Office Designations**

An “office designation” must be placed underneath the name of any incumbent judge who is seeking reelection. (Art. VI, Sec. 24, of the State Constitution)

The incumbent judges who are seeking reelection are coded “INCUM” on the official candidate listing. The wording of the office designations which must be printed underneath the names of the incumbent judges are provided below:

Justice of Supreme Court  
Judge of Court of Appeals  
Judge of Circuit Court  
Judge of Probate Court  
Judge of Probate District Court  
Judge of District Court

Two points merit note: 1) it is improper to use the word “Incumbent” to designate incumbent judges on the ballot and 2) incumbent judicial officers are the only elected public officials who are eligible to receive an office designation on the ballot.

### **IV. Presentation of Candidate Names and Office Titles**

The following standards must be observed:

- Candidate names and clarifying designations must be printed in upper case and lower case letters.
- Candidate names must be printed in boldface type.
- Clarifying designations must be printed in regular type as opposed to boldface type.
- The voting targets must be placed to the right of the candidates’ names.
- The candidates’ names and clarifying designations must be justified to the right to avoid any confusion over the target area that must be marked to vote for any given candidate.
- Office divisions must be printed in boldface capital letters and centered in a shaded box.
- As the ballot instructions include information on casting a write-in vote, the spaces provided for write-in votes do not need to be labeled in any way (e.g., “write-in” or “write-in candidate”). (Such labeling has led to voter confusion in the past.)
- Avoid placing thick bold lines near ovals to avoid ballot misreads.

- ID bars and channel code bars must not touch the ballot cut marks.
- Avoid print washout (skips in ink or faded ink).
- When cutting ballots, ensure that the cut is not skewed.

## V. Candidate Name Rotations

Michigan election law, MCL 168.569a, stipulates that candidate names must be rotated on the ballot in specified instances to eliminate the chance that a candidate may be unfairly advantaged or disadvantaged in an election by his or her position on the ballot.

When rotations are required, the candidate names are rotated from one precinct to the next. Ballot to ballot rotation, formerly employed when paper ballots were used, has been eliminated. If absent voter ballots are processed by absent voter counting boards, each ballot form which contains identical offices and names is considered a separate precinct for ballot rotation purposes.

**When rotation is required:** The following outlines when candidate names must be rotated on the ballot:

- Candidate names are rotated on ***non-partisan primary ballots and non-partisan general election ballots*** in cases where the number of candidates running for an office exceeds the number of candidates to be elected to the office. (If the number of candidates filing for a judicial office in a non-partisan primary is equal to or less than the number of candidates to be elected to the office, the office does not appear on the ballot. If the number of candidates filing for a city office in a non-partisan primary is equal to or less than the number of candidates to be elected to the office, the office does not appear on the ballot unless otherwise provided under the city charter. If the number of candidates appearing on the ballot in a non-partisan general election is equal to or less than the number of candidates to be elected to the office, the candidates' names are listed alphabetically.)
- Candidate names are rotated on ***partisan primary ballots*** in cases where the number of candidates a party has running for an office exceeds the number of candidates to be elected to the office. (The names are listed alphabetically in cases where the number of candidates a party has running for an office is equal to or less than the number of candidates to be elected to the office.)
- Candidate names are *not* rotated on ***partisan general election ballots***. (In cases where there is more than one candidate to be elected to an office in a partisan general election, the candidates are listed alphabetically under each party.)

**Rotation procedure:** Candidate rotations are arranged by the printer and the election official responsible for printing the ballots. As a starting point, the candidates' names are placed in

alphabetical order. With each subsequent rotation, the name in the first position (top of column) is shifted to the last position (bottom of column). The rotations must be planned to ensure that the various precinct rotations are – to the extent possible – evenly distributed throughout the city, township or county.

## **VI. Office Order**

The order of the offices on statewide August primary and November general election ballots is specified under Michigan election law as detailed below. (MCL 168.570a, 697, 699)

### ***Partisan Ballot***

#### **State and Federal Offices**

Governor and \*Lieutenant Governor  
Secretary of State  
Attorney General  
United States Senator  
Representative in Congress  
State Senator  
Representative in the State Legislature  
Member of the State Board of Education  
Regents of the University of Michigan  
Trustees of Michigan State University  
Governors of Wayne State University

#### **County Offices**

County Executive (if elected in county)  
Prosecuting Attorney  
Sheriff  
Clerk  
Treasurer  
Register of Deeds (if office has not been combined with office of County Clerk)  
Auditor (if elected in county)  
Mine Inspector (if elected in county)  
County Road Commissioner (if elected in county)  
Drain Commissioner  
Coroner (if elected in county)  
Surveyor (if elected in county)  
County Commissioner

**City Offices** (if elected on a partisan basis; order of offices is governed by the city charter)

**Township Offices**

Supervisor  
Clerk  
Treasurer  
Trustee  
Constable (if elected in township)  
Park Commissioner (if elected in township)

**Precinct Delegate Positions**

<i>Non-Partisan Ballot</i>
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**Judicial Offices**

Justice of Supreme Court  
Judge of the Court of Appeals  
Judge of the Circuit Court  
Judge of the Probate Court  
Judge of the District Court

**City Offices** (if elected on a non-partisan basis; order of offices is governed by the city charter)

**Township Offices**

Township Library Board Director

**Village Offices**

President  
Clerk  
Treasurer  
Trustee

**School District and District Library Board Offices**

Local School District Board Member  
Community College Board of Trustees Member  
Intermediate School District Board Member  
District Library Board Member

## **VII. Placement of Ballot Proposals on Ballot**

In any instance where the proposal portion of the ballot must list a combination of state proposals, county proposals, city proposals, local school district proposals, community college district proposals, intermediate school district proposals and/or district library proposals, the proposals must be presented in the following order:

State Proposals  
County Proposals  
City Proposals  
Local School District Proposals  
Community College District Proposals  
Intermediate School District Proposals  
District Library Proposals

## **VIII. Presentation of Ballot Proposals**

After the question, the words “Yes” and “No” must be printed on separate lines. A voting target must be placed to the right of the word “Yes” and to the right of the word “No.”